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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TALLINN 000023

SIPDIS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA PASS TO AMCONSUL ADANA
AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO AMCONSUL ALMATY
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/08

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [EN](#)

SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER TAKES INITIATIVE TO INTEGRATE RUSSIAN
SPEAKERS IN ESTONIA; AGREES TO MORE RESOURCES TO FIGHT DIGITAL PIRACY

CLASSIFIED BY: Marc Nordberg, Pol/Econ Chief, State; REASON: 1.4(B),
(D)

Classified by Ambassador Michael Polt for Reasons 1.4 B & D.

¶11. (C) Summary: In a February 3 courtesy call on Minister of Interior Marko Pomerants, the Minister briefed the Ambassador on his push to accelerate the integration of Estonia's Russian-speaking minority into mainstream Estonian society. Pomerants, worried particularly about the pervasive influence of Moscow-produced media on Estonia's Russian speakers, is convinced the Government of Estonia (GOE) must spread its own messages to these residents. Pomerants is working to convince other ministries to issue GOE press releases in Russian and is considering creating a state Russian-language newspaper to spread news about Estonia. On other topics, Pomerants responded positively to the Ambassador's urging that Estonia make greater efforts to fight digital piracy. Pomerants replied that he and the Minister of Justice recently agreed to devote more efforts to combat cyber crimes. End summary.

"Integration My Pet Project"

¶12. (C) In their introductory discussion, Pomerants spoke at length to the Ambassador about the integration of Estonia's Russian-speaking minority, calling it his "pet project." Pomerants was particularly concerned about Ida-Virumaa County, in north-east Estonia on the border with Russia, where he said 84 percent of the population is Russian-speaking and 47 percent either hold Russian citizenship or are stateless. He stressed that Estonia, "needs to make an effort to keep this region," and claimed Russia was exerting its influence in this particular county through Russian-language media imported from Russia, as well as by training teachers. Pomerants, reflecting Estonian policy, emphasized that Russian speakers in Estonia should learn Estonian, in order to be eligible to apply for state jobs (a prerequisite for these jobs is Estonian citizenship, one element of which is to pass an Estonian language exam). Pomerants also stated that the Estonian state must do more to inform Russian speakers about even basic information on Estonia. He said he is working to convince other ministries and the Prime Minister's Office to start issuing government press releases in Russian as well as Estonian. Pomerants himself gives some interviews in Russian. His ministry is also considering creating a state-funded Russian-language newspaper, or at least creating inserts for existing papers to get the government's

message out. While being open to conveying Estonian state positions in the Russian language in the near term, Pomerants nonetheless stressed that he supports the overall GOE objective to increase the number of Estonian citizens through naturalization, without easing the requirement to pass an Estonian language test.

Fighting Digital Piracy

¶13. (C) The Ambassador stressed that Estonia needs to make serious progress combating digital piracy. Pomerants replied that he met with the Minister of Justice February 2, and both agreed to use greater efforts to countering cyber crime. Pomerants added that Estonia will be better positioned to fight digital crime if it is allowed to host the EU's new IT Agency (Note: An EU decision is forthcoming; both Estonia and France have offered to host).

Airport Security

¶14. (C) Discussing the failed Christmas attempt to bomb a flight over Detroit, Pomerants said he did not think additional efforts for airport security, such as confiscating liquids or "small scissors," added anything to safety. He did say he was resisting

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pressure to exempt VIPs from going through security at Tallinn Airport and believed that increasing Passenger Name Recognition efforts, to stop terrorists before they reach the airport, was a much more effective solution. The Minister agreed with the Ambassador that announcements, such as the one made by Estonian airport authorities, that no new security measures were needed at Tallinn airport, were not helpful in maintaining a visible high-level security posture.

¶15. (C) Comment: Up to now, the MOI has played a relatively small role in integration policy. Pomerants' energy has not been welcomed enthusiastically by others in the GOE, and established Russian-language media outlets have also not responded positively to his initiative, sensing competition. While we need to watch carefully how the Russian-speaking community greets the greater involvement in integration of Estonia's security service, in principle we support Pomerants' initiative, and we welcome his ideas on creating media alternatives, albeit more private than government ones to enhance their credibility, to the Moscow muckrakers.

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